

SELECTED QUOTATIONS

(Some Literary Support for an Old Man's Prejudices)

**“... to share what is giving us pleasure
and gratification at this stage in our lives.”**

OFC Charter

MAJOR SOURCES

Durant, *The Story of Civilization*

Macaulay, *The History of England*

Cruise-ship libraries

Whitelaw Lending Library

"The whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, *the best which has been thought and said in the world*, and, through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly, which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically."

Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*

**"The ill and unfit choice of words
wonderfully obstructs the understanding."**

Francis Bacon

MUSIC / ART / BEAUTY

HUMAN NATURE

POLITICS

RELIGION

BOYS AND GIRLS

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

THE MEANING OF LIFE

MUSIC / ART / BEAUTY

"Sunrise -- generally a rural event, in cities a mere abstraction. . . ."

I. McEwan, *Saturday*

"We should do our utmost to encourage the Beautiful, for the Useful encourages itself."

J. W. Goethe

When listening to Chopin, Oscar Wilde “felt as if he were weeping for sins he had not committed and tragedies that were not his own.”

Baudelaire said that Chopin`s music was ‘like a bird of brilliant plumage, hovering over the horrors of the abyss.’

Kenneth Clark, *Civilisation*

**I can't listen to that much
Wagner. I start getting the
urge to conquer Poland.**

Woody Allen

"I should like to like Schumann's music better than I do; I dare say I could make myself like it better if I tried; but I do not like having to try to make myself like things; I like things that make me like them at once and no trying at all."

Samuel Butler

**“‘What is too silly to be said may be sung’
– well, yes; but what is too subtle to be
said, or too deeply felt, or too revealing or
too mysterious – these things can also be
sung and only be sung.”**

Kenneth Clark (on opera)

"[The Goldberg Variations] offer . . . at all the best moments the passionate asceticism of his old age."

Glenn Gould

"A work that may be read as a kind of last will and testament, Bach's *Musical Offering* leaves us . . . the following proposition: that a world without a sense of the transcendent and mysterious, a universe ultimately discoverable through reason alone, can only be a barren place; and that the music sounding forth from such a world might be very pretty, but it can never be beautiful."

J. R. Gaines

"It is though eternal harmony were conversing with itself, as it may have happened in God's bosom shortly before He created the world. Thus profoundly was my soul stirred and I felt as if I had neither ears nor eyes nor any other senses, and had no need of them."

J. W. Goethe (on Bach' organ works)

HUMAN NATURE

“...why land and graves matter, and why the nations matter which protect both.”

Michael Ignatieff *Blood and Belonging*

The most general survey shows us that the two foes of human happiness are pain and boredom.

"Style is the physiognomy of the mind, and a safer index to character than the face."

A. Schopenhauer

**Men are commanded not to covet because
when they do, they are very apt to steal.**

Lord Halifax

People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf.

George Orwell

**"He was born with a gift of laughter and
a sense that the world was mad."**

R. Sabatini *Scaramouche*

**“Kindness is the language that the
blind can see and the deaf can hear”**

Mark Twain

"Swiftly, as Orientals understand speed"
Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*

**"A tense and peculiar family,
the Oedipuses, were they not?"**

Max Beerbohm

"The only sure thing that can be said about the past is that anyone who can remember Santayana's maxim is condemned to repeat it. As a result, the danger of not understanding the lessons of history is matched by the danger of using simplistic historical analogies. Those who have learned the lessons of Munich square off against those who have learned the lessons of Vietnam, and then they both invoke the bread-and-circus days of the overstretched Roman empire in an attempt to sound even more subtle and profound."

Walter Isaacson

**"So convenient a thing it is to be a
reasonable creature, since it enables one
to find or make a reason for everything
one has a mind to do."**

B. Franklin

In about 1200, Adelard of Bath returned to England after studying in many Moslem countries. When he was united with his friends he asked about the state of affairs in England. He was told that the kings make war, judges take bribes, prelates drink too much, all promises are broken, all friends are envious. He accepted this as a genial summary of the natural and unchangeable condition of things, and proposed to forget it.

Durant

Conduct, deprived of its religious supports, deteriorates into epicurean chaos; and life itself, shorn of consoling faith, becomes a burden alike to conscious poverty and to weary wealth. In the end a society and its religion tend to fall together, like body and soul, in a harmonious death. Meanwhile among the oppressed another myth arises, gives new form to human hope, new courage to human effort, and after centuries of chaos builds another civilization.“

Durant

**"I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas.**

Yet winds to seas

Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore. . . ."

John Milton, *Samson Agonistes*

POLITICS

**"An honest politician is one who,
when he is bought, stays bought."**

Simon Cameron

“Everything changes but the avant-garde.”

P. Valery

“The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.

H. L. Mencken

“Everywhere there is a class of men who cling with fondness to whatever is ancient, and who, even when convinced by overpowering reasons that innovation would be beneficial, consent to it with many misgivings and forebodings. We find also everywhere another class of men, sanguine in hope, bold in speculation, always pressing forward, quick to discern the imperfections of whatever exists, disposed to think lightly of the risks and inconveniences which attend improvements, and disposed to give every change credit for being an improvement. In the sentiments of both classes there is something to approve. But of both, the best specimens will be found not far from the common frontier. “

Macaulay

**"I often think it's comical
How Nature always does contrive
That every boy and every gal,
That's born into the world alive,
Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative!"**

W. S. Gilbert *Iolanthe*

“There is always a certain meanness in the argument of conservatism, joined with a certain superiority in its fact”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?"

A. Lincoln

"John Steinbeck said that socialism never developed in America because the chronically optimistic citizens never see themselves as workers, just temporarily embarrassed millionaires."

"The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan

“A society that adopts a bill of rights is skeptical that 'evolving standards of decency' always 'mark progress,' and that societies always 'mature,' as opposed to rot.”

Antonin Scalia

"Great Yamato (Japan) is a divine country. It is only our land whose foundations were first laid by the Divine Ancestor. It alone has been transmitted by the Sun Goddess to a long line of her descendants. There is nothing of this kind in foreign countries. Therefore it is called the Divine Land."

"History of the True Succession of the Divine Monarchs", 1334

RELIGION

The doctrine of original sin is the only part of Christian theology that can be proved.

G. K. Chesterton

"The Arminian [free-will] doctrine, a doctrine less austere logical than that of the early Reformers [who were Calvinists], but more agreeable to the popular notions of the divine justice and benevolence, spread fast and wide."

Macaulay

The puritan hated bear baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.

Macaulay

"It is Christmas; our hearts are open. It is the time when all ages and all times meet as one. We are the parents and we are the children. Childhood is the country we had to leave behind and at Christmas we get to go back and try to speak our very first language."

Garrison Keillor

In Europe, the Age of Faith reached its last full flower in Dante; it suffered a vital wound from Occam's "razor" in the fourteenth century; but it lingered, ailing, till the advent of Bruno and Galileo, Descartes and Spinoza, Bacon and Hobbes; it may return if the Age of Reason achieves catastrophe.

Durant

BOYS AND GIRLS

**"Do you know why God withheld
the sense of humour from women?**

**That we may love you instead
of laughing at you."**

Mrs. Patrick Campbell

But every young patrician sobered his dress when he became a member of the Great Council; then he was required to wear a toga, for by a robe almost any male may be endowed with dignity, and any woman with mystery.

Durant

This was not a great year for guys. . . .Guys are in trouble. Manhood, once an opportunity for achievement, now seems like a problem to be overcome. Plato, St. Francis, Leonardo da Vinci, Vince Lombardi – you don't find guys of that calibre today. What you find is terrible gender anxiety, guys trying to be Mr. Right, the man who can bake a cherry pie, go shoot skeet, come back, toss a salad, converse easily about intimate matters, cry if need be laugh, hug, be vulnerable, perform passionately that night and the next day go off and lift them bales onto that barge and tote it. Being perfect is a terrible way to spend your life, and guys are not equipped for it anyway. It is like a bear riding a bicycle: he can be trained to do it for short periods, but he would rather be in the woods doing what bears do there.”

Garrison Keillor

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

“The Ancients stole all our great ideas”

Ed Ruscha

**"All professions are conspiracies
against the laity."**

G. B. Shaw, *The Doctor's Dilemma*

“Being a professional is doing the things you love to do, on the days you don't feel like doing them.”

Julius Erving

**"The older I get the more I admire and
crave competence, just simple competence,
in any field from adultery to zoology."**

H. L. Mencken

**“Never attribute to malice that
which can be adequately explained
by incompetence.”**

Napoleon

Which of us is original, except in error?

Durant

**"Tain't what we don't know that hurts us so much.
It's what we know that ain't so"**

Atemis Ward

Dear Sir,

**I am deeply interested in doing a
research at your esteemed Univ.**

Kindly supply with full details.

Thanking you,

Sincerely yours,

etc

"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts."

Einstein

“It’s more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has.”

Hippocrates

“Lydgate . . . carried . . . the conviction that the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good.”

G. Eliot, *Middlemarch*

"... these damned general practitioners ought never to be allowed to touch a patient except under the orders of a consultant."

G. B. Shaw, *The Doctor's Dilemma*

"If a man is reported to have spoken ill of you, make no defense, but say, 'He did not know the rest of my faults, else he would not have mentioned only these.'"

Epictetus

THE MEANING OF LIFE

“Happiness isn’t something you experience. It’s something you remember.”

Oscar Levant

“Whatever you are, be a good one.”

A. Lincoln

**“See everything; turn a blind eye to
much; correct little.”**

John XXIII

"Never," said my aunt, "be mean in anything; never be false; never be cruel. Avoid those three vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you."

Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*

"All in all, in life and history, we have found so many good men and women that we have quite lost faith in the wickedness of mankind."

Durant

"Be patient now, my soul; thou has endured still worse than this."

Socrates

**“These are the calamities by which
Providence gradually disengages us from
the love of life.”**

Samuel Johnson

“At this point I reveal myself in my true colours, as a stick-in-the-mud. I hold a number of beliefs that have been repudiated by the liveliest intellects of our time. I believe that order is better than chaos, creation better than destruction. I prefer gentleness to violence, forgiveness to vendetta. On the whole I think that knowledge is preferable to ignorance, and I am sure that human sympathy is more valuable than ideology. I believe that in spite of the recent triumphs of science, men haven't changed much in the last two thousand years; and in consequence we must still try to learn from history.”

Kenneth Clark

**Tho much is taken, much abides; and tho
We are not now that strength that in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.**

Ulysses, A. Tennyson

“He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much; who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it. . . .”

Bessie Anderson Stanley (with respect to Fred [Mr.] Rogers)

. . . I come home and feel so well understood. I almost don't have to say a word. I was not a good person. I have yelled at my children. I neglected my parents and was disloyal to loved ones. I have offended righteous people. People around here know all this about me, and yet they still smile and say hello, and so every day I feel forgiven. Ask me if it's a good place to live, and I don't know—that's real estate talk—but forgiveness and understanding, that's a beautiful combination.

Garrison Keillor

**“Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.”**

Matthew Arnold, *Dover Beach*

**An honest man here lies at rest
As e'er God with his image blest;
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so informed:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.**

Robert Burns

**Time, like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all its sons away
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day**

O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Isaac Watts, 1708